

This Week!

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### OLD DAYS IN INDIANA

#### RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LIFE OF FIFTY AND SIXTY YEARS AGO.

Lafayette Then a Great Commercial Center--How It Lost Trade--Reminiscences of School Life.

A few days ago the writer read in the Journal some sketches of "Steamboating on the Wabash," which revived in his mind pictures of life in Indiana, fifty and sixty years ago, which he vainly wishes he could paint for your readers as vividly as the pencil of time has fixed them on the tablets of his memory. And how far away they seem! And yet it is not the long vista of years down which we look which seems to move them back centuries in the misty past. It is the inventions, the improvements, the changes which separate that time from this as though hundreds of years intervened. Yes, between the sickle and the self-binder, the ox team and the locomotive, the stage coach and the lightning express, between mush and milk and the delicacies of the tropics is a period as indefinite and incomprehensible as it divides us from the siege of Troy or from Arthur and his Round Table. Yet that time has been, and men and women yet living have seen it. And while these men and women yet live let them paint the pictures of those days, that the present and future generations may know what Indiana was in its infancy. And here is one.

A letter! Yes, a letter in the postoffice, and for us! Just think of it! The writer was twelve years old, and such a thing had never happened in our family before; in fact, we had not heard of such an event in any family in the vicinity. But how to get it out, that was the question! The postage was 25 cents, to be paid on delivery! For, bless you! there were no stamps in those days; nor could you pay postage in advance. Then, the postage was graduated according to distance, from 5 cents to 25 cents; over three hundred miles was 25 cents for a letter. We well knew who this was from. It was from an older brother who lived far away from New Orleans--to us the uttermost parts of the earth. What in the world any one wanted to visit such remote countries for the wisest could not determine. Yet he had gone; in his youth and his ignorance he had survived the dangers and yet lived. But how were we to get it? Or, rather, how were we to get the necessary 25 cents? It was not probable that we could have borrowed it, had we been so disposed, of a farmer in a radius of five miles. All kinds of "trucks" was paid for in "store goods," and so no one had money. At last mother sat on an expedient. Her butter was known and celebrated all over Lafayette, and she felt confident that enough of it could be sold for cash to secure the coveted letter. So an older brother and myself were sent with instructions and a bucket of butter. And what butter. Yellow as gold and solid as the eternal hills. The pure essence of the blue grass, and printed in pound rolls. We went to the residence of the wealthy citizen and soon secured the necessary amount. But it took four pounds of butter to do it. And the letter had been only four weeks on the way.

But these conditions were not long to continue. A mighty impetus was slowly wending its way up the Maumee and down the Wabash--something which would connect us with the great world and wake us up, and at last it came. It was nothing less than the Wabash and Erie canal. Lafayette, at once came to the front and was soon the largest city northwest of Cincinnati. And it was separated from that city by a week of terrible traveling. The only route between the two was by way of Crawfordsville to Indianapolis, for the black swamps of Boone and Clinton counties were impassable; consequently, there could be no rivalry between the two cities. We already had steamboat connection with New Orleans, and the canal gave us a water route to New York; navigation on both ended at Lafayette. After this, that city could pay cash for grain, hops, cattle and all kinds of products that would stand the long water route. It at once became a great mart, and, for a number of years, probably did more business than all the towns and cities northwest of Cincinnati. To people of the present generation this will seem an improbable story, and I think I see the smile of incredulity lighting up the eye of many a one who has whirled through the little city--a mere way station--on route to Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and the great Northwest of the present. But sixty, or fifty, years ago the Indian was the only dweller within hundreds of miles of all these except Chicago. And sixty years ago the English name of the creek upon which that great city stands had not been translated into Indian. Consequently, it was still the mouth of Skunk river.

One who has lived only in the days of railroads has no idea how far men could and did haul grain for cash, especially about tax-paying time. From a radius of a hundred miles--east, west, north and south--came hundreds of teams loaded with grain or hops. Three States, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, contributed to the crowds which daily thronged the streets of this embryonic city in the woods. Fifty wagons often stood in line, waiting their turn to be unloaded, of course, at 10 to 15 cents a bushel; or of wheat, at 25 to 45 cents a bushel. Then, during the season, thousands of hogs were driven to the only slaughter house west of Cincinnati, while hundreds were killed at home and hauled there at from \$1 to \$1.25 a hundred dressed. You farmers of the present day think of and pity the men who cleared the farms you now occupy and had to get their grain to market in this way. Twenty-five bushels was a good load, and the trip would take from three days to seven or eight. If the load was corn he would realize from \$2.50 to \$3.75. If it was wheat, he would average \$8 for his load. But yet so many were after these pittance that I have seen the wagons become so jammed and tangled up on the narrow streets along the canal that the horses had to be taken off and the tangle straightened out by hand. But visit these silent streets now; as well visit the ruins of Babylon and try to imagine the vast crowds which once peopled its busy marts.

STEAMBOAT TRAFFIC.

Then came the steamboats, the accessories which made the rapid settlement of the middle West possible, and kept it in touch with the world outside. They must not be forgotten, especially by a boy who lived less than a mile from the river in those pioneer days, before there were schools or churches. How many times have I run that short mile to gaze on one during the ten or fifteen minutes it would be in sight. And how the memory now creeps in under my gray hairs every time I see boys running after a fire engine. I can understand such boys and appreciate their motive. I often pity old men who swear at boys for doing this. I can't help but wish that sixty years ago they might have lived a long mile from the Wabash. They would understand boys better now if they did. Very vivid now is the recollection of the arrival of the first steamboat which was loaded down to the guards at New Orleans with coffee, sugar and molasses for the first wholesale houses west of Ohio. And with her there lay at the wharves of Lafayette that day sixteen steamboats, any of them large enough to have navigated the Mississippi. To-day their loads would probably stock the city for a year.

Then comes a picture of those terrible days in 1848, when the cholera came. I had just read Almsworth's "Old St. Paul," a story of the fire and plague in London. It is the only novel the details of which are impressed on my mind. St. Louis and Lafayette were scourged as were no other cities in the United States. Probably not more than four thousand remained in the city all through it. Yet the death rate reached forty a day--one in a hundred--and did not fall below thirty a day for three weeks. The busy city was as hushed as a graveyard, and its crowded streets were deserted. The writer has stood during that time at the foot of Main street--the Washington street of the city--and gazed up the thoroughfare for an hour, in all that time seeing nothing, in a mile, but a hearse or a doctor's buggy! Indulge me in one sample picture of the many which memory conjures from among the scenes of that terrible scourge! One day I was standing at a saloon counter, drinking a glass of "strong beer," when a passing pedestrian fell in at the open door, and was undoubtedly dead when he struck the floor. Charlie Powers, the young man behind the bar, turned white with fear, and in two hours he, too, was a corpse.

Beautiful "Star City!" your glory has departed, and the writer heard one of your funeral orations. When railroads began to be built it was supposed they would gather up the produce of the country and carry it to the water courses. The idea of carrying grain from Indiana to the seaboard on cars never entered the dreams of the wildest visionaries. Consequently, the first roads were built north and south--to the lakes or the Ohio river, or to both. The Illinois Central, the Monon and the Cincinnati division of the Big Four are samples. It was while this conception of railroads was prevalent that the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago Railroad Company--the main line of the Monon--came to Lafayette, and proposed to build through the city for a bonus of \$50,000. The writer's brother was a member of the City Council, and when he returned from the meeting called to settle the matter the writer asked him: "Well! Did you give them what they wanted?"

"Not a -- cent! The trade is here, and the business is here, and if they want it they've got to come here to get it."

And "Not a -- cent" was the policy. Whether it was a railroad or a manufactory that knocked it, got the same answer. We are the center of the business universe, and we do you a favor to even allow you to come here. When the transition period was over, and we had passed from the era of canal boats and stage coaches to that of railroads they found themselves behind the times. Then the census of 1850 showed that Indianapolis had a few hundred the larger population. This factually paralyzed them. And "not a -- cent" had done it.

Then the school and schoolhouse of that day. Let me paint them before time draws the grave's impenetrable veil over the last picture from which a copy can be made. But let me premise by saying that no description can ever convey to the youth of the present age a perfect idea of the conditions under which the youth of that day obtained the germs of an education. And this is largely owing to the fact that it is perfectly impossible, with the conditions now surrounding them, of believing that such were possible sixty years ago. But I will do the best I can to impress upon your minds at least the outlines of a picture which is so vivid to me. And first, the frame and setting.

Mr. Gray, who lived near our schoolhouse, having had better educational opportunities than any one else, all aspirants for the school applied to him. He would entertain the would-be teacher over night and pump him. That was all the information we had as to his qualifications or his moral character, as he was invariably a stranger. If Mr. Gray approved of him, the two started out and visited every family that had children within about two miles of the schoolhouse. Each subscribed for as many of their flock as they could afford to pay for. The terms were usually \$1.50 for each pupil for three months--from Dec. 1 to March. For under the old Constitution of Indiana, there were only twelve months in a year. If the teacher made a good impression, or if times were good, he got about thirty pupils. This would give him for his three months' work the munificent sum of \$45--if he collected it all. Out of this he had to pay his board, at about \$1 a week. This would still leave him with more money than the majority of people had ever seen in one pile; for, remember, we are again back in the days before the canal.

THE FIRST SCHOOL DAYS.

At the ripe age of nine years the writer first got an opportunity to gratify his craving ambition. The name of the teacher was Scott, and that he came from "down East" was all the information vouchsafed us. He left us to do the filling. We completed the history with roseate dreams of New England, and her system of education, and our good luck in getting a teacher from the land of free schools and colleges. It was two miles to school, with no brick sidewalks, either, not even a road or a path. It was right across lots, timber, brush, cornfields, wheatfields, high fences; in fact, the country, just as God had made it and man marred it. Much of the way we had to go over the snow from six to fourteen inches deep, and we had a two-mile road to break, with the thermometer at or near zero. Every time one's foot started down into that snow to find a resting place for a step one didn't know whether it would find a hole or hump. Then, remember, my dear boys, there were no rubber boots in those days, or boots of any kind for boys. Rubber had not been discovered and boots--well, I know boys didn't get them. Nor were there shoe stores where you could buy such things. Ready-made shoes came long after. All shoes were made by the local cobblers. Every autumn we killed a beef and took the skin to a tanner. Twelve months after we would get half the skin back, tanned and ready for the shoemaker. Out of this "cowhide" all shoes were made and they would no more bend than a wooden shoe.

Nor were there drawers, or undershirts, or underwear of any kind for man, woman or child, and an overcoat would have been laughed at. All these things were yet a long way off. Boys, when old enough to discard dresses, were clothed just like men, with coat, trousers and vest; all made of jeans--half wool and half cotton; all made at home and unlined. So, when a boy stuck his foot down into twelve or more inches of snow his trousers would slip up and it was his bare leg which made the hole. Now, sometimes when I sit dreaming and hear a boy say: "Mamma, may I go out and play in the snow?" My mind reverts to those walks and I wonder what strange playing boys will want next.

And now we are at the end of our walk, and the schoolhouse where the writer graduated is before us. And that house! Its picture inside and out, with furnishings, is indelibly stamped on the crannies of my brain and I will try to give you an idea of what it so plainly see before me. It was some thirty feet square and probably came to the eaves, and was built of round logs, just as they came from the tree.

### VOICE OF THE PULPIT

#### A FRIENDLY AND DISPASSIONATE WORD WITH THE SKEPTIC.

A Short but Very Pertinent Discourse from the Pen of the Rev. L. B. Voorhees, of Groton, Mass.

If any man will do . . . he shall know. --John vi. 17.

It is better to be a skeptic than to be untrue to one's intuitions, one's reason or one's conscience. It is better to believe but few things than to believe a good many things that aren't so. Yet doubt brings no joy or repose to the mind, neither does it urge us to earnest endeavor. Great characters and great achievements are born of faith, while unbelief binds our hands and feet and paralyzes all our energies.

Our doubts are traitors. And make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.

There are dishonest skeptics who will not accept truth unless it falls in with their prejudices and desires, of whom the Autocrat at the Breakfast Table says: "Some men's minds are like the pupil of the eye--the more light you throw on them the more they contract." I am not to speak to them to-day. There are, too, honest doubters with whom I have a personal sympathy--men who think for themselves and whose love for truth makes them cautious. This very love for the pure gold of truth makes them suspicious of the great mass of glittering ore. I remember that.

There lives more faith in honest doubt, Believe me, than in half the creeds.

I respect an honest, thinking doubter more than the one who accepts all the old traditional doctrines simply because his grandfather and grandmother believed them. I wish to speak to those who cannot believe the commonly accepted teachings of Christianity with the fraternal feeling of one who has passed through experiences similar to their own, as one who found no peace in unbelief, as one who has found that there is that in the religion of Jesus Christ which brings a satisfaction that can come from no other source.

Greater knowledge will not, as a rule, dispel your doubts. Skeptics are found among the learned and the illiterate, and education suggests more questions than it answers. You will not be able to ascertain whether the Bible is true by grammar and lexicon and commentary.

When the Master taught in the temple the people were astonished and exclaimed: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Because He had not been educated in their schools, they marveled at His wisdom. His wisdom came from the fact that it was His meat and drink to do His father's will, and He makes the same principle applicable to all men. "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself."

To emerge from the fog of doubt, then, a man is to do the will of God. But you say, "How can I do the will of God before I know whether or not (1) is the will of God? How can I be expected to obey the teachings of the Bible before I know whether or not it is true?" These are natural questions, and the skeptic should not be asked to do anything unreasonable.

The truth which I wish to present and illustrate is this: Obey the truth you have, and you will be led into greater truth. I do not ask my questioning brother to obey all truth, but to obey as much as is known and as far as it is known. It is fundamental that we should assume the right attitude toward truth and be ready to welcome and obey it when discovered.

Let me suppose myself to be an honest skeptic, and that I do not know whether the Bible is true or false. What am I to do? I am all at sea as to the great Christian doctrines; but I know this, that there is a distinction between right and wrong. My conscience informs me of the moral character of my actions, and I know that I ought always to obey this inward monitor. I cannot deny these facts without denying my nature. I believe, I will assume, that there is a God, and I resolve to be loyal to my conscience always and everywhere. I train the inward ear to listen to its voice, and to rightly interpret its commands, and I endeavor to regulate my conduct by its teachings. I listen constantly to its clear and impressive admonitions, and some day, when its voice has been unusually imperative, I say to myself, "There is something in me that is not of me. It represents a higher and holier than myself. Does it not speak with a delegated authority? May it not be what Byron calls it, 'the oracle of God'?"

"Would that I could find somewhere a revelation of this God. Is it not reasonable for me to expect that he who made me with this craving has provided somewhere a supply for it?"

The newly-hatched bird opens its mouth, expecting a supply, the new-born babe seeks its mother's breast, and I, an honest doubter, instinctively look about me to see if there be not somewhere a revelation of truth from that God to whom my conscience points. I find a book that calls itself the word of God, I read it, I go on trying to obey this friend within me and I discover that what this book says corresponds remarkably with my experience.

I find that, notwithstanding my resolution, I give conscience only a limited and imperfect obedience, and this brings a consciousness of ill desert and guilt, and I find in the Bible, "There is none that doeth good, no not one." I feel the need of forgiveness and I cry out for God as a lost child for its mother. But God is a spirit. What is a spirit? I cannot conceive of pure spiritual existence; I cannot pray to a vague, intangible something, somewhere, afar off, in the dim, distant heavens. Now this book tells me that God was in Christ, and I say:

"My mind's eye can see him as he is in Christ. I can pray to him as he is in Christ. I can realize his sympathy in my temptations and trials. Truly in this Bible is bread for my heart hunger. I believe it is from God, because it meets the wants of my nature. It is adapted to my spiritual needs, as the light to my eye, or the air to my lungs."

I begin to follow the Bible as my guide; I find it opens a safe and pleasant path for my feet; I find my weakness reinforced by Almighty strength; I find the unrest of guilt followed by the peace of pardon; I hear a voice above the overwhelming waves of doubt that says: "Peace, be still." I find that this religion of Jesus Christ makes me nobler and happier and better, and helps me to do my part in all the activities of life. I will do to God's will, and now I know his teaching; my belief is not founded on heredity or custom, or inference, or theories, but on my own experience.

Let us be loyal to the truth we know, and we shall be led into greater truth. In building the Brooklyn bridge, at first a small rope was carried across, then a small cable was pulled over, then a larger, and another still larger, until the bridge was completed, and now great loaded wagons, crowded cars and innumerable pedestrians, an endless procession, safely pass from shore to shore. As God has made us, there is a slender cord between us and him. If there be nothing but the divine, toward monitor, follow it; and there will soon be a cable connecting you

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